



**Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona**

PRESS RELEASE

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YUMA HOTEL OWNERS SENTENCED FOR HARBORING OVER 100 ALIENS

PHOENIX – Bharatkuma Jivabhai (B.J.) Patel, 39, and his wife Vinaben M. Patel, 40, of Yuma, Ariz., were sentenced here in federal district court on April 18, 2005 by U.S. District Judge Neil V. Wake. B.J. Patell received a sentence of 27 months in prison while V. Patel received a sentence of two years probation. In addition to his prison sentence, B.J. Patel was fined \$15,000 and will be placed on two years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison sentence. Vinaben Patel was fined \$2,000. The defendants also paid \$100,000 in lieu of forfeiting their motel to the United States.

Both defendants pleaded guilty on September 27, 2004, to Conspiracy to Harbor Undocumented Aliens and aiding and abetting, in violation of Title 8, U.S. Code, Sections 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii), (v)(I), and (v)(II).

Working with other smugglers, the Patels harbored over 100 undocumented aliens at their motel, the RegaLodge, in Yuma, Ariz. A locking device was placed on the inside doorknob of the motel room in order to prevent the aliens from leaving the motel.

B.J. Patel is ordered to surrender himself to federal authorities on May 18, 2005.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The prosecution was handled by Lisa Jennis Settel, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

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